

Information Item: Review of proposed Underwater Archaeological Resource Management Plan; Administrative Cause No. 09-039B

In 2004 the Indiana Lake Michigan Coastal Program (LMCP) conducted a program self review. This review followed Federal Guidance under the Section 309 Program Assessment and Implementation Strategy from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Office of Coastal Resource Management. The Indiana document is based upon an open public process that identified priority program and policy areas. A high priority is the development of an Underwater Archaeological Management Plan. In preparation for the development of this Plan the LMCP staff has met with DNR Law Enforcement, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, and the NRC Division of Hearings. This purpose of this information item is to share the highlights of the background work that require attention and demonstrate some of the technology that will be used in this project.

Goal: Develop a management plan for significant underwater archaeological resources in state waters of Lake Michigan.

Program Change

The state will conduct an inventory of significant underwater archaeological resources and develop a management plan for the enjoyment and protection of those resources. This project will provide additional detail to the LMCP by providing better information and interpretation of state authorities for the management of coastal resources. This is considered to be a “routine program change.”

Impact of the Change

Development of the management plan will begin by creating an inventory of known underwater archaeological resources. The management plan will identify relevant state and Federal laws, rules, regulations, and guidelines that apply to the resources. Specific recommendations will be provided regarding the best strategies for the state to use for providing appropriate access to, and long-term protection of, the resources. Having the inventory and management plan will enhance the historic, cultural, economic, and educational value of the resources and result in improved protection of the resources.

Appropriateness of the Change

The threat to underwater archaeological resources was identified as High/Medium in the Assessment. A major “gap” identified was the need for an underwater archaeological resources assessment and management plan. This project addresses that “gap.” The DNR Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology (DHPA) has general authority over historic and cultural resources in the state (312 IAC 6-3), including specific authority through administrative rule to protect abandoned shipwrecks for historic and recreational purposes (IC 14-21-1). Limited funding has prevented the DHPA from conducting a comprehensive inventory of known underwater archaeological resources or plan for their protection. Completing this project will enable the state to fulfill its obligations under these authorities.